UNITY.

FREEDOM, FELLOWSHIP AND CHARACTER IN RELIGION.

VOL. VI. *CHICAGO, JANUARY 1, 1881.* No. 9.

EDITORIAL.

Hoosac Tunnel is soon to be lighted by electricity. Science is yet to illuminate many a passage darker and more dangerous than this.

"Parables from Nature" is the title of a new book published by G. P. Putnam's Sons. If the book is as suggestive as the title, it must be a desirable one. We need another Nazarene to read the lessons of morality and piety out of that book whose pages have been so amplified since he studied a mustard-seed and read the lilies.

The lamented astronomer, Prof. Watson, at the time of his death was busy in perfecting arrangements for the study of the stars by daylight. Using a deep well into which the light was thrown by reflectors, he was able to make observations at noonday. Perhaps there are other fields where students could see farther by descending to more humble levels.

The new walk leading to Swarthmore College was bordered last summer with rows of young oaks. The far-reaching plans of these *Friendly* Trustees suggest a painful contrast with the eager haste that immerses western homes and towns in forests of cottonwood and poplars, whose decay is as inglorious as their growth is ambitious. The sore need of some shady screen to rest the eye and shield the body may justify this wasteful growth of decennials on our bare prairies. But what can justify the still sadder yielding of those immaterial fields of mind to the ragged forests formed of the short-lived trees of speculative selfishness that are incapable of producing the enduring timber of character? Let more spiritual acorns be planted in '81 than in '80.

THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN.

Deep into the sub-soil of history does the Christmas season strike its roots. From far-off times men wiser than they knew have brought their frankincense and myrrh to this celebration, and they have always laid them at the feet of childhood. Pagan as Christian, this is preeminently the children's festival. It is well that it should be the great festival of the year, for theirs is the ministry of innocence by Divine appointment. Let the theologian urge total depravity as he may; let the scientist dwell as long as he pleases on the great law of heredity that carries corruption from parent to child: there yet is an innocence in a babe that brings to the forefront all the nobler instincts of our nature. In its presence passion and lust hide their heads. The cry of a child rebukes our harshness, and when it smiles, the profane forgets his oath. At this season of the year, we are all worshippers at that shrine that wrought such a transformation in Roaring, that ever-memorable miners' camp of Bret Harte's creation: "They've got vines and flowers 'round their homes; they wash themselves twice a day, and they worship an Injin baby."

1881—GREETING.

The backward look is always a demoralizing one. In art and mythology the devil always lurks in the rear; if he succeeds in inducing his victim to look around, his triumph is won. From the day of Lot's wife to this, looking back has been fraught with disaster. Dante found down deep in the eighth circle of hell, the false prophets, and their heads were all turned backward on their shoulders. This is the first sign of decay. The octogenarian planting an orchard, thinking of

> "Fruits that shall swell in sunny June,"

is younger than the youth of twenty who cries,

> "Make me feel the wild pulsation
> That I felt before the strife."

The world's heroes are those who, like the miners, carry a light on their foreheads. The spirit of prophecy and poetry is forward-looking. "Christian progress is obtained by oblivion of the past," says Robertson.

The New Year greets us with an invitation to go forward. Life is too sweet to waste it in apologies for past blunders. Errors biographical, as typographical, constantly occur, and to stop to explain and excuse is as profitless in the one case as the other. Let the motto of our Unity band be, "We'll Criticise by Creation." Correct the past by better doing in the future.

DECIMATED RANKS.

The mysterious silence has recently fallen upon four great preachers of the gospel of Unity: Lydia Maria Child, the John the Baptist of free religion, the forerunner of a gospel so large that it included the gospel of Christendom as one of many: Lucretia Mott, she who of all the devout souls of the generation just gone, most believed that the "voice of the Lord" is to be heard in the present time,—the prophecy that was her gift, being not foretelling, but telling; not pre-vision, but vision: E. H. Chapin, the Chrysostom of the Liberal faith in America; the golden mouth of the Universalist body; the great theological fire-extinguisher of this century: George Eliot, the greatest Liberal preacher out of the pulpit that ever used fiction to teach fact; the great chemist of conduct; the biographer of soul. She reached the Mount of Transfiguration by the long but sure way of science and experience, knowing and imparting to thousands of others "that parching thirst for a perfection undemanded by one's neighbors." Will these gaps caused in the ranks by 1880, be filled by 1881? Not unless others have learned the prayer of Mrs. Browning as well as these did:

"Get leave to work; get leave to work;
Be sure 'tis better than what you work to get."

STIMULATING ABSTINENTS.

Frances E. Willard, who deservedly stands at the head of the Women's Temperance organizations of America, tells in *The Signal* just how to conduct a Lucy Hayes Tea Party, "the latest thing out in society." Tickets are to be sold by young people. Church parlors are good places for them, "tea being furnished in all sorts of styles, including *a la Russe*. Quaint placards with Japanese characters are posted up, advertising 'so much a cup.' Choice little Chinese or Japanese cups are sold—so much for the tea alone, so much more if you take the cup as a souvenir." The temperance autograph albums are provided for signatures. These parties, "properly reported by the press," she thinks, will set the "towns agog," increase the Hayes Fund, and "greatly help the total abstinence sentiment." Granted. But will it help the total abstinence practice? Miss Willard and her well-meaning associates talk much of "striking at the root of this evil." Can she forget that many a rootlet of this baneful tree spreads itself in the bottom of the tea and coffee cup? The teapot bears exactly the same relation to many a stimulant-loving woman that the cigar and the "occasional" glass of beer do to men in the incipient stages of inebriety. A little more science and a little less dogmatism is as good for temperance as it is for religion. Reformers sometimes need reforming.

CONTRIBUTED ARTICLES.

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM.

C. G. HOWLAND.

[*Concluded.*]

I am sure that it is coming to be the opinion of the best men in America, out of politics, that our system of short official terms is extremely vicious, and the cure of that evil is intimately connected with the destruction of presidential and congressional patronage. They must fall together. If the spoils system were brought to an end to-day the great reform would not be half accomplished, because a thousand vacancies will occur to-morrow, and another thousand the next day, and an eager horde would take the places of those who left,—also to go out in a little while, just as those did before them, their hunger not at all appeased by that upon which they have briefly fed, but with a constantly sharpening appetite they would have a greater desire to linger at the table, or the "crib," than when they took their seats. If only one of these things could be done, either official patronage or the term system abolished, it is quite as important that it should be the term system, for then the office-holder might do as he liked about shouting for his chief and submitting to assessments, and it would at once quiet and drive into better business a vast army of uneasy or unsuccessful men who live from year to year, and from one administration to another, on official expectation.

But it will be just as difficult to change our State and Federal Constitutions, fixing a limit to official tenure, as it will be to prevail upon congressmen to give up their patronage; but the same public opinion which corrects one abuse will be able also to correct the other. Neither will be done until there is a revolution in popular sentiment. When senators who have been accustomed to dictate nominations and control patronage in their States are thwarted by executive influence in their schemes for promoting their own interests, and sulk and growl and obstruct the administration, let the people with one voice declare that the honest President shall be sustained, and the senatorial mind will allow no unseemly delay before bowing acquiescence. To change laws and constitutions and customs which have become a part of our national habit, and to which everything around us has been adjusted, will not be an easy thing to do. It will take time to accomplish all this. But we are to remember that revolutions work faster than they once did; new ideas circulate with wonderful rapidity; it is very different from what it was before the time of railroads and newspapers. I imagine the hardest thing to overcome will be that curious notion among our countrymen about offices, which is, that one of their main objects is for the benefit of the individuals who hold them. That is the whole secret of the cry for "rotation" in office. That is the whole meaning of the demand for frequent changes, and out of this strange conception of what offices

are for have grown the scores and scores of sinecure places under the government. Only a very few of the voters here in Michigan, or in the United States, consider for a moment that offices have been instituted for the purpose of doing public business, and not to furnish employment. The almost universal opinion seems to be that they have been established partly for the purpose of giving profitable and easy places to persons qualified to fill them, and who cannot do much else, and that it is everybody's right to have a turn. This is a great mistake. "Rotation" is a good rule to apply until the best man is found, and then it should be abandoned. Office is no man's right. No one owns it. No one has any "claims" upon it unless he can perform its duties better than any other man. Least of all can a disinterested person suppose that offices which belong to the people, and which exist solely for their convenience and accommodation, can be rightfully used to advance the interests of a man or a party. Is it not a shameful perversion of their purpose, that offices, established by the government and supported by a common fund, should be used to help or hinder any man attain or retain power; that the post-office where one gets his letters, and the internal revenue office where he pays his tax on the articles he manufactures, and the custom-house where he pays duties on his imports, should be used to prevent his election to congress because he does not agree in politics with the men who hand to him his letters and weigh his goods? Is not this a gross interference with the rights of opinion as well as the violation of a public trust?

I believe in civil service reform. There is need of it. I want party politics driven by law and by an indignant public sentiment from every Federal office in the country, and never allowed to return. It is scandalous that for fifty years the government offices, in the just management of which all men have the same interest, should have been the hotbeds of party politics. We have something to learn in this respect from one of the worst periods in English administration. Mr. Dorman B. Eaton, in his admirable work on "Civil Service in Great Britain," to which I am greatly indebted, says a law was enacted, in the reign of Anne, relating to post-office officials, which declares that if any of them "shall by word, message, or writing, or in any manner whatsoever, endeavor to persuade any elector to give, or dissuade any elector from giving his vote for the choice of any person to serve in Parliament," he shall be liable to a fine of £500, and on conviction "shall become disabled and incapable of ever bearing or executing any office" under the crown. "That law," says Mr. Eaton, "is still in force, and is printed in the standing instructions before the eyes of every postmaster in the United Kingdom. To its salutary influence we may doubtless attribute the exemption from partisanship, and in no small measure the unrivalled efficiency of the British postal service; while the absence of such a law in our service has allowed so many of our postmasters to be politicians and their offices to be electioneering agencies."

There is another law of the time of George III.; for, bad as matters were in that reign, especially the early part of it, the reform movement had fairly begun, and was felt in parliamentary enactments, *just as we must rely upon laws of Congress instead of a President's order*, good as that may be. But this act relates to the parliamentary candidate who improperly solicits support, and declares that if "any person shall by himself or other person give or procure to be given, *or promise to give or procure to be given, any office, place, or employment, to any person or persons whatsoever*, upon any express contract or agreement that such person shall by himself, or by any other person or persons, their solicitation, request, or command, procure or endeavor to procure the return of any person to Parliament," the candidate knowing and consenting to such agreement, is "declared to be disabled *and incapacitated to serve in Parliament*." *

I fear we shall wait a long time before our Congress rises to such a virtuous height.

In what striking contrast is this old English law of Queen Anne, forbidding postmasters to interfere by the slightest word in the election of members of Parliament, with our custom of considering the office a centre of party influence. The postmaster of almost every large town in Michigan (and I think the rule holds elsewhere) is the editor or publisher of a party newspaper, and instead of feeling any reluctance about urging an elector to give his vote for this congressional candidate or to withhold it from that, it is understood to be an important part of his business, and that the private and public functions are thus combined precisely for that purpose. Of course it will not be claimed that such a position enhances the value of such a newspaper as an organ of candid political opinion, but it can easily be shown that if not fatal, it is at least injurious to political candor. As long as the spoils system is maintained, no editor or newspaper publisher should be eligible to any office of profit under the State or general government. England once disfranchised everybody connected with the custom-house, the inland revenue and the post-office departments, to prevent their meddling with the elections and to put a check upon official patronage. That should not be done here, but they should be forbidden, as President Hayes did forbid them, all active participation in political concerns, and then the order should be rigidly enforced, even if senators frowned. I am glad that the President has done something, so much, indeed, and been as true, perhaps, to his letter of acceptance and the platform on which he was nominated, as he could be; that he took into his cabinet a man not belonging to his party, which had not been done before within the remembrance of any one who hears me. But my sore regret is that he has not done more; and I have a still deeper regret that he should have felt any sense of obligation, or been bound by the promises of his friends, to reward those who counted States in his interest, when, according to the testimony of a distinguished

* "Civil Service in Great Britain," 135.

general, they had not an honest man for their friend. These are sad things, over which it may be the kindly veil should be drawn; but nothing is so stern as history or so lasting as a disgrace. And if the man who sincerely desired reform, and has done more for it than any other President, can stoop in such a way as this, what are we to expect of the ordinary President and the average congressman who make scarcely any pretense of believing anything but the system of official patronage?

I do not say that this system furnishes no good officials: far from it; nor do I say that there has been no improvement in the last three or four years, —far from that also; but I say that the system is a fearfully vicious one: for besides being unjust, and the source of an untold amount of corruption, it cannot be so efficient when persons for public trusts are called only from one party as when the appeal is made to the best character and ability of the whole nation.

The opposition to civil service reform in high quarters will be far more obstinate than it will be among the people, even though they dearly love "rotation" in office. I think it ought to apply to State and County offices as well as to Federal offices; but this is too much to hope; and besides, the grievances here are not so great. If the spoils and term systems can be abolished in all offices of the general government, and character and ability made the only tests of fitness, it is about as much as we can expect of American human nature. And righteousness must begin among the people, or senators and congressmen will never know there is such a quality in existence. I do not mean that they are worse than other men, for it is not true; but they are just like other men, with this difference, that they thrive upon the favors which a miserable system enables them to confer upon those who aid them to an election. I do not suppose there is a man in either House of Congress who believes in civil service reform. Our present methods are the ones by which the members of both houses, as a rule, have obtained their places, and they are the methods by which they expect to be kept where they are. Do not imagine that they will be the first to abandon those methods. The bitter senatorial opposition to President Hayes, whose administration has been the best we have seen for a generation, comes from a determination to hold on to the old system at all hazards. The moment that the average congressman finds there is no field for him wherein to display the peculiar arts of the politician, and no way of paying for election services in offices not his own, he will be compelled to change his occupation or make himself really worthy of the suffrages of his fellow citizens. If they were obliged to pay for their election (as senators from Kansas have on several occasions, and I have no doubt from other States also) in money from their pockets, rather than indirectly by securing the appointment of their friends to rich offices, it would lessen this species of bribery, and I do not think it would increase the other; and even if it did magnify the temptation to give money and buy an election outright, according to the Kansas custom, a quickened moral sense among the people, which must be the result of the abolition of official bribes, would be very sure to detect and expose the criminals.

Offices are not to be regarded as a political party regards them. They must not be considered as fair plunder for the stronger forces, to be fought for with the same desperation as an army of savages fights for its wigwams and ponies against another which has come to dispossess them. There was a time when the Caucasian was no farther advanced in civilization than the Sioux and Crows of Dakota; but that was long ago, and now, when we have come to cook our food and wear woven cloth, it is not seemly to adopt the ways of primitive men.

No party in our day can claim that it has a stainless history, that it represents a superior virtue, and that it is contending for a vital principle which the other studiously neglects and disavows. There is no valid and honorable reason for the existence of parties at this moment. There is no important issue which divides the nation into two great parties to-day. The reform of the civil service is of supreme importance,—it is the one vital concern of America; but neither party is committed to it, and both sternly refuse to be, for they have become little else than powerful combinations,—I will not call them gangs of conspirators, as they call one another, but powerful combinations, as the author of "A True Republic" says, whose main purpose is to carry elections and secure the offices. Ingenious orators may discover something else that will satisfy the voters whom they address, and convince them that unless they shout, and carry torches, and go to all the pole raisings, and to the headquarters every night, the other party will surely win, in which case the solid earth will immediately split asunder, but I suppose they have their laugh after the election, as the priest in the picture does after the sermon.

And equally erroneous is the idea that offices can be rightfully controlled and given away to whom they please by senators and representatives in Congress. It cannot be possible that the founders of the government intended that public offices should be a source of immense profit to members of Congress; they could not have meant that the offices should be used to secure any man's election, nor to perpetuate any man's power. When so used, it is a gross perversion. The banker, the merchant, the grain buyer, has just as much right to control them as the congressman. They may just as fairly be used in the interest of the miller, or to add to a manufacturer's profits, or by the farmer to pay for his help, as by the senator or representative to pay for election services, that is, for his help. Offices must not be considered personal property which a president or senator can bestow upon a man who brings him fifty or a thousand votes. What an enormous bribe a candidate for either House of Congress holds out to one when he says that he will make him a collector, or postmaster, or territorial governor, or consul in a great foreign port, if he will "work" to make him representative or sen-

ator. Yet this is the common practice in every State of the Union. Is it any wonder there is such frequent resort to unlawful means, when such interests are at stake, and that elections are often only a farce? Then here is a vast body of men all over the country, numbering 100,000 in all, eagerly enlisted in the political fortunes of those to whom they are indebted for their places, and to the party under which they hold office. What a system it becomes! Every man of them bound to contribute some portion of his salary toward the election expenses; every man of them taxed for the support of the party in power, and every one of them knowing that he will lose his place if the election goes against his party. An election in England does not ruffle the life of the public offices in the least degree whatever; but it is said that the report of a Republican defeat a few days ago in Maine caused a panic in all the departments in Washington; and when it was announced, after the last presidential election, and generally believed for some days, that Tilden had been elected, the consternation and even despair among the government clerks and subordinate officials "was as great as though an invading army had been within a day's march of the capitol." I have spoken of the corruption of the spoils system, and of its close relation to bribery; this illustrates its cruelty.

The main question in our politics to-day is the improvement of the civil service. I make this great cause a part of my religion. Of course there are great financial questions; there are great commercial questions; there are great educational questions; but this overshadows everything else, and the party that sincerely takes it up will be sure at length to win. But I have not the faintest hope of parties as they are at present controlled. Those who lead them are the main part of the "thing to be reformed." It is true, I do not know what a Democrat would do in these days if he were in office; I cannot speak positively; our traditions concerning him as an office-holder are becoming somewhat dim; everything is conjectural, for there are no facts within the knowledge of persons willing to talk freely of their age upon which to base an opinion,—and history, besides being partial, contains a certain fabulous element; but there is no reason at all to suppose that Democratic methods would differ in any way from Republican methods. Sometimes I fear that nothing will be done for American politics until one party has been in power so long, and behaved so outrageously, and so shamefully abused its trusts, that the other party will seriously and heartily take up the great question of civil service reform, maintaining as the central thing in platform and speech and editorial that qualifications for federal offices shall henceforth and forever be non-partisan. In that sign, any party, however small to-day, will grow and conquer by rapidly gathering to itself the worthiest elements and the best forces in our national character and life. I do not know how far away this reform may be, but the time is surely coming when the practice of buying distinguished positions and paying therefor in lucrative offices will be stopped; the time is surely coming, if we survive the present degradation, when it will be deemed just as infamous to accept a place as to offer it for electioneering services; when, to wear the party badge, and make of politics a trade for the sake of gain, will be disgraceful; when, by laws of a nobler Congress than we have to-day, appointments to all except a few great offices in which the policy of the government is to be represented shall not depend on one's opinions, but on character and proved fitness alone, and when once in government employ and doing the best work, he shall stand in no fear of removal, but, like the judge and the general, keep his place as long as that character and fitness remain. The man who ridicules all this; the man who says we now have the best system in the world,—a system which cultivates the largest and most patriotic spirit, and gives to youth its noblest lessons,—is in the mental condition of the Butes and Walpoles and the English kings of the last century, and I wish there might arise among us another Junius, to shame him and his friends and followers into a higher type of political life. It is deeply mortifying to know that America, in the procession of mighty nations, should walk behind. I would that the young land we love were as pure as it is strong, upright as well as great, and by the common suffrage of mankind stood by the side of the worthiest. With one purpose let us all resolve that the reproach shall be wiped away and our dear country take her place in the same rank as the old land from whose loins she sprung.

THE MORAL GAINS OF CHRISTIANITY.

II.

W. M. SALTER.

I have indicated in a previous number of UNITY what is in general meant by the title of this paper,—that comparison is not made with religions that stand in no close historical connection with Christianity, nor with the one of which Christianity is only a development, Judaism, but with those which it supplanted, namely, the religions of the Roman Empire. There is this complex somewhat we call western civilization; Greece and Rome, Judea and the barbarian tribes of the North, have all had an influence in shaping it; the East is not without its part, but it is an insignificant one compared with the mighty, direct influences of the above-mentioned peoples, and, so far as its action has been salutary, it is of an intellectual rather than a moral sort. What has Greece contributed to the whole? Not morality or religion, though certain elements of these were present in a high degree, but rather philosophy and art. What has Rome left us? In some respects her morality was purer than that of Greece; but her political instincts and principles are her best legacy to the western world. What of Judea? Her politics were petty; neither philosophy nor art flourished in her midst; but there was on the part of her most gifted sons an insight into the true end of life, an enthusiasm for it, a passion, a fervor, that lift her into the position of the *religious inspiration* of the west; from Judea come to us morality and religion in inextricable fusion—and

this is Christianity, in its best elements a strictly Jewish product. But Jews were few, and apart from the prophetic spirit, provincial; Greeks and Romans were brutalized, or else over-refined and enervated; the northern tribes, fresh, untainted with the vices of civilization, holding in high esteem woman and the family, were the good ground into which most successfully Christianity threw its seed.

Christianity acted *upon* these two latter classes,—we will not allow in all respects favorably, nor even in all *moral* respects (of its limitations, its excesses and perversions we may speak at another time); but its moral influence *in the main* was salutary, and has given rise to certain virtues in western civilization, which may be called characteristically Christian. We noticed in the preceding paper that Christianity had this distinction from the Pagan (to use Lecky's word, viz: the Greek and Roman) religions, that it was avowedly moral, Lecky even saying that to make men virtuous was no more the function of the [Pagan] priest than of the physician, the opini ns of the philosophers having little effect upon the popular religions, though in themselves as elevated as anything that may be found in Jewish prophecy. It is left for us now to sketch the outlines of the Christian morality, to show in some detail the advances that were made. It was no slight thing simply to awaken the general idea of duty, to hold up a law for men's passions and selfishness, to make a concern for *the right* (which was pictured as God's will) the chief thing in men's thoughts; but the practical worth of this appears in the applications of the law to the social circumstances of the time.

Herbert Spencer speaks of the two typical virtues of ancient and modern times, as courage and chastity (Data of Ethics, p. 37); and we will add to the latter, charity. We venture to call both chastity and charity, as they exist in our western world, *Christian* virtues; not that to Christianity they owe their origin, not that they would not have in a measure existed without Christian influences, but that Christianity is the name for that ethical impulse and movement in history under the guidance of which these virtues have won that *pre-eminent place* in our moral estimation that they now have. Patriotism is not a Christian virtue (if it had been, Christianity would probably never have been founded, Tertullian well voicing the sentiment of the early church when he said there was nothing he cared so little for as public affairs, Augustine plaintively adding, in the same strain, "What concern is it under whose government he lives to a man *about to die?*"); nor is intellectual honesty, or ever in any such sense as charity or chastity, is moral honesty, the regard for equity, justice,—the scientific spirit came into Europe with the Renaissance and is of Greek rather than of Christian origin, and the spirit that seeks for and demands justice or equity in law will find more to inspire as well as to inform it in the Roman lawyers than in the fathers of the church. But in works of charity, in care for the unfortunate, in a pity that almost treasures the poor and afflicted, and in the high esteem and absolute demand for purity in the relations of the sexes, we shall look in vain among the Greeks and Romans and Barbarians for more than approximations to the well-nigh constant teaching and example of the Christian church.

In the first place, as to charity, or more broadly, as to varied applications of the spirit of humanity and feeling of the sanctity of human life (and here we follow Lecky closely). The practice of *abortion* was a common one in antiquity; no laws either in Greece or Rome condemned it; Aristotle even desired to have laws favoring it when the population should exceed certain limits. But in regard to this sin against human life, the church took a stern stand, placed it in the same category with infanticide in its penitential discipline, and by the Council of Ancyra the guilty mother was excluded from the sacrament till the very hour of her death, though the severity of this punishment was afterward relaxed. *Infanticide* was, according to Pagan and Christian authorities, "a crying vice of the Empire." There were laws against it, but they were easily and constantly evaded. The church gave new authority to the law by its discipline, and moreover treated the custom, "practiced on a gigantic scale," of exposing children with the same severity of sentence as actual infanticide. The *suppression of the gladiatorial shows* is to be ascribed almost exclusively to the church. Extremely few, even of the best and greatest men of the Roman world, condemned the games absolutely; they had originated naturally in the custom of offering sacrifice at the tombs of the dead, actual combatants coming to take the place of involuntary human sacrifices, and the combats at last occurring on almost any festive occasion; the philosophers objected, sometimes vigorously denounced them as degrading and brutalizing, but it was a step in advance for the Christian to characterize them definitely as a sin, the sin of murder. It is the Christian estimation of human life, its sacredness as involved in its capacities for the highest ends of existence (as pictured in the terms "salvation" and "kingdom of heaven") that is at the bottom of the church's attitude. Christianity had a grand ideal before it which we in this age sadly miss, namely, of a perfect social state soon to be realized by the intervention of Divine power, and into which the poorest and meanest, so that their hearts were right, might hope to enter,—hence the inestimable worth of every human soul. And what ideal shall take the place of this, is a question for free thinkers seriously to concern themselves about, if we are to keep the Christian regard for the sanctity of life in our morality. Hence, further, the almost Quaker feeling that prevailed in the primitive church as to *war*. Even a general or an emperor, and though the war was recognized as a righteous one, could not approach the altar without a preparatory period of penance; and priests were for a long time kept from persecuting heresy to death, when in other respects the theory on which persecution is based was fully matured. The influence on the penal code of the Empire was, however, slight, legislation seeming, probably, like a poor device to those who

expected the whole human order soon to be replaced by a perfect Divine one. Hence, too, the view of *suicide*, which modern statistics show to be rapidly increasing in frequency and "to be peculiarly characteristic of those nations which rank most high in intellectual development and in general civilization" (Lecky II. 64). The ancient feeling in regard to suicide was very different from our own. Pythagoras and Plato had, indeed, compared men to soldiers who should stand at their post and not leave until called by their Maker; Aristotle had urged the civic argument, that our lives are due to the State (which is replaced in modern times by the consideration of one's family, a consideration scarcely noticed either by the Pagans or the early Christians); Plutarch had called the taking of one's life cowardice, and recommended rather the patient endurance of suffering; but, notwithstanding, Lecky says that "a general approval of it floated down through most of the schools of philosophy, and even to those who condemned it, it never seems to have assumed its present aspect of extreme enormity" (I. 226). "Why," cries Seneca "should I endure the agonies of disease, and the cruelties of human tyranny, when I can emancipate myself from all my torments and shake off every bond! * * * The lot of man is happy, because no one continues wretched but by his fault. If life pleases you, live. If not, you have a right to return whence you came" (Ep. LXX.). This represents a feeling which we venture to say will grow among men who are without religious belief, until some new religion gains a fresh authority over them. We are now living on an inheritance from Christian thought and feeling in regard to the matter. Christianity viewed suicide as murder, for which men shall be answerable in another world,—and death gained a new solemnity, in whatever way it was approached, by the stern doctrine of penalties that should come after it. As to *slavery*, though there were shortcomings in the attitude of the church, though it did something towards perpetuating the institution by its emphasis on the virtues of resignation and obedience, its influence on the whole was toward mitigating its hardships and toward abolishing it. The absolute wrongfulness of slavery was never taught; such a view had hardly any prevalence outside of the Jewish Essenes and a few of the Stoics,—though the doctrine of the natural equality of mankind was frequently expounded by the church fathers, as by the Pagan philosophers,—one out of many instances of the unconsciousness of the full meaning of principles on the part of those who state them. But Christianity put new charity into the hearts of masters and introduced an order of relations (the church) where master and slave were on perfectly equal footing. It gave dignity to the slave in lifting the qualities which he must exercise into a high rank in the moral scale, (namely, humility, patience, resignation, virtues neglected or underrated by the Pagans); and "it gave an unexampled impetus to the movement of enfranchisement" (II. 70). A similar influence Christianity had in redeeming captives from servitude; "in no other form of charity was its beneficial character more continually and splendidly displayed" (II. 76). But here, as in almost all other beneficent relations, the work of Christianity has been in its dealing with individuals, and not in the endeavor to change social conditions. This one-sided nature of Christianity is probably intimately connected (in modern times, simply by way of inheritance and tradition) with the strong primitive belief in the return of the Christ to judgment, a belief according to which any elaborate and systematic inquiry and work in relation to social conditions was unnecessary. In connection with the technical *charity* of the Empire, and the contrast with the number of charitable institutions in every Christian country, it must be remembered that the Roman slaveholders were responsible for the care of their slaves, as indeed the system of heritage provided for those of a higher rank, and in addition it was one of the most important functions of the State to relieve the indigent. Charity flourishes only where the poor are at the same time independent. There was a beginning of a system of popular education under the emperors, and in Trojan's reign, 5,000 poor children were supported by the government in Rome alone. Still, there is no question that charity in antiquity did not "occupy a position at all comparable to that which it has obtained by Christianity" (II. 83). The church made charity, the giving of alms or relief, a rudimentary virtue. The Council of Nice ordered that a public hospital should be erected in every city. Undoubtedly a great deal of harm has been done by Christian charity, there is a tendency to increase poverty as well as to relieve it, Lecky even saying of the monasteries that the amount of poverty relieved by them is "insignificant compared with the poverty they have caused" (II. 100); but the original and constantly underlying spirit has been of the purest kind, and it is on that spirit of love and pity that even the most careful and elaborate endeavors for the improvement of conditions must rest for their inspiration and sustained motive-power. An advance in statistical and economical knowledge will be of little avail without a new birth of the old tenderness and zeal,—the same that founded hospitals, made men missionaries, found strength in obstacles and human weakness, and illumined ages of the world otherwise dark.

But there is no contrast, probably, so striking between the pre-Christian and Christian world as in the feeling in regard to chastity and the relations of the sexes. Let any one who wishes to get a picture of Greek morals read Xenophon's account of Socrates' visit to the courtesan, Theodota (Memorabilia, Book III. chap. xi.) The courtesan, Lecky tells us, was the one free woman of Athens (II. 310), and she after acquired a degree of knowledge which made her intellectually fascinating, and gathered about her artists, poets, historians, philosophers, and became "the centre of a literary society of matchless splendor." Aspasia, who won the love of Pericles, was such a woman; Socrates, with other philosophers, attended her assemblies. "The Christian doctrine, that it is criminal to gratify a powerful and a transient physical appetite, except

under the condition of a life-long contract, was altogether unknown" (Lecky II. 314); again, "the tone of calm and joyousness that characterizes Greek philosophy, the almost complete absence of all sense of struggle and innate sin that it displays, is probably in a very large degree to be ascribed to the fact that, in the department of morals we are considering, Greek moralists made no serious attempt to improve our nature, and Greek public opinion acquiesced, without scandal, in an almost boundless indulgence of illicit pleasures" (II. 131).

In Rome, as marriage stood higher than in Greece, so the courtesan class, though probably numerous and certainly uncontrolled, were differently regarded, and indeed stood in contempt. Still, if any one will see what even the best Roman moralists thought, and how lightly they judged irregular relations, let him note the following from Cicero: "If there be any one who thinks that young men should be altogether restrained from the love of courtesans, he is indeed very severe. I am not prepared to deny his position; but he differs not only from the license of our age, but also from the customs and allowances of our ancestors. When was it blamed? When was it not allowed?" (Pro Coclia, chap. xx.) And Epictetus recommends his disciples to abstain "as far as possible from prenuptial connections, and at least from those which were adulterous and unlawful, but not to blame those who were less strict" (Enchiridion xxxiii.)

The contrast between this and Christian teaching we need not point out; but it is well for us to know, when people talk of returning from the stiffness and narrowness of the Christian view of life to the Greek or classic ideals, what is really involved therein. There is no quicker touchstone of a religion (or of a man) than in its view respecting a family, and the sanctity of all that is necessary to it; and any future religious movement which does not treasure all that in these relations Christianity has won, will be not an advance but a retrogression. Christianity did indeed go to the opposite extreme, but asceticism is a nobler extreme than sensuality, and it is doubtful whether any earnestly ethical view of life can maintain itself without more or less of asceticism. Repression, denial—these are hard words for an easy going, luxurious age; but every athlete, every soldier, every thinker, yes, every successful business man will bear witness that they stand for things that are necessary to the accomplishment of their ends. Even the great Goethe, the apostle of nature and natural development, says, "Our physical as well as our social life, manners, customs, worldly wisdom, philosophy, religion, and many an accidental event, all call upon us to deny ourselves" (Autobiography, Bohus Ed. II. 63). Nature and natural instincts are good when they are in harmony with our ideas of right; but when not, they are not to be followed because of some fancied mystery or divinity about them; they are *to be brought into harmony with the right.* Is it not possible that religion is a work—that the Divine comes nearest us not in anything we see or know, but in our idea of what ought to be? The ascetics were not inhuman; they did not hate their natural instincts but they had a vision of something better and that made it impossible they should rest where the world was resting,—and their spirit, if not the form and method it took, is that with which everything great is accomplished. The ascetic ideal may not be a true or possible one, though it is unquestionably hinted at in the New Testament and even in the words of Jesus; but it is an ideal in the right direction; it marks man's progress from the animal upward, as does indeed approximation to it mark the distinction between uncivilized and the civilized man, and between the lower and the higher orders of society. Marriage, with the relations it involves, is a means, not an end; the culture of the individual, intellectual, ethical, political, is the only worthy end of human life.

Will any one question, after this hasty review of the moral work of Christianity, that it has been, whatever its excesses and shortcomings, in the main of the nature of an advance? How Mr. Frothingham could give the following as a fair account of the contents of Lecky's volumes, passes my comprehension: "Mr. Lecky, too, in his 'European Morals,' makes it appear that the Roman Empire neither experienced conversion nor needed it; that it was prepared to receive the best that Christianity had to give; that in fact it was in condition to improve Christianity in some important details, and did in some respects, modify it for the better, while itself modified by it for the worse." (Beliefs of the Unbeliever, p. 7.)

CORRESPONDENCE.

HERBERT SPENCER ONCE MORE.

To the Editor of Unity:

I have been intending for some time to write an article for your paper in reply to some points taken by Mr. Bixby concerning the ethical doctrines of Herbert Spencer. I was glad to see the clear and well-written article of Mr. Rowen; and yet I am not quite satisfied.

In your paper for Oct. 1, Mr. Bixby says: "For the moral intuitions long to maintain their present authority, should Spencer's theory of ethics become generally accepted, would be a psychological impossibility."

It is very common, in theological and ethical discussion, to substitute prophecies of evil consequences that are to follow for this or that theory, in place of *clear analysis* of the theory itself and of *proof that it is not true.* Now I am one of those who at present believe in Mr. Spencer's theory. If I believed this theory injurious and untrue, I should repudiate it. But if injurious, it must be untrue. For if truth is injurious the universe is radically wrong; and there is little use in any of us trying to do anything.

Now, I would like to have you print this, as an invitation to Mr. Bixby to tell us *wherein* Mr. Spencer's theory is *false* to the *facts;* and also *why*, on Spencer's theory, morals are to *lose their authority.* So far as I can see, it seems to me that there can be no stronger basis for anything than *the accumulated experience of the whole human race for all time.*

If Mr. Bixby will substantiate his statement above quoted, I will join him in opposing Spencer. If he does not seem to me to succeed, I would like to send you an article containing the reasons why. Sincerely,

M. J. SAVAGE.

Boston, Nov. 29, 1880.

FROM COLORADO.

DEAR UNITY:—I could not very well tell you about my Colorado venture until to-day. Came here with my family eleven weeks ago. Walked many miles every day for eight weeks, in this wonderful city, to find a house, and utterly failed till last week. Am very grateful now for a convenient little house only a mile from our church, though its rent is enormously high. Weather has been exceptionally severe here since we came,—22 degrees below zero for some days in November. My family and self have been quite sick with very severe colds. Yet am glad that I came to this fair, pleasant and busy Denver. Our "Unity Church" here having been closed for a year, its friends were scattered; some discouraged; some went to other churches, and many grew careless, and utterly gave up all church-going. This made it hard to start services in the church, and to find the scattered people. A few ladies in the church are above all praises for their brave, undaunted zeal. They have worked like beavers during the year when they had no pastor nor service in the church. In a quiet way they worked and made $2,084.62 that year to pay several small debts into which the society fell during the previous effort, and to pay off $500 of the mortgage on the church.

These ladies have also encouraged and helped me much since I came. I have been greeted by a very good congregation of intelligent men and women every Sunday since Oct. 1. We have started a live Sunday School also. Pupils increasing every Sunday. We have an interesting Bible class, and also teachers' meeting and religious conversational meeting every week. It looks as if Unity Church here will flourish. Such a church is very much needed in Denver, where there are thousands of religious people heartily tired of the old theology. The great question is, how to attract them out of their great indifference. Am thinking night and day how to wipe away the $3700 mortgage that remains as a nightmare on the church. And as these ladies say, "It *must* be paid," of course where there is such a will there must be a way of paying it.

I have just returned home from a missionary visit among the mountains. One day I went by the Narrow Gauge Railroad to Central City. That little train climbed more than 3,000 feet in a few miles. I felt almost wild with joy as I stood on the platform of the car, watching the train winding up Clear Creek Canon between craggy mountains on each side towering almost perpendicularly to the sky. Often there would be hardly room for the little creek and narrow train. Many times I would look ahead, and see a high rock filling the canon, and it seemed that we never could go a yard further. But when we would come to the huge barrier, the mountain seemed to move its leg to let the train pass. This happened many times. When we came to the town of Black Hawk, it was enchanting to behold the houses pitched high on the rocks; some houses had their foundations higher than the chimneys of the next houses. There is only one mile between Black Hawk and Central City, yet our train had to creep five miles on the rocky shelves of mountains to make that one mile. I held my breath in fear lest we might tumble over from these high shelves to the deep abysses below. I am told that there is hardly one yard of the rails without being curved in those five miles. I was glad to leave the train at Central City and find a careful pony to carry me still higher up the mountains, till I arrived in a mining place called Russell Gulch, where many warm hearts waited for me. The miners had just completed a neat chapel, costing about a thousand dollars, every cent of which they had paid. I had to preach four times in two languages. And I never saw such hungry people for the Gospel. The chapel was crowded—the singing excellent. Between meetings I had to talk all the time to anxious inquirers about "this new liberal doctrine." Even the children were intensely interested. Had to tear myself away amid a hundred invitations to "come again very soon."

Bro. Gibbs, of Greeley, invites me also to help him to hold a Unitarian protracted meeting for a week in that town; and I must try to go. The Unitarian Society in that place promises to be the largest in town. So we feel that this thin, wintry atmosphere of the Rocky Mountains has in it something favorable to liberal religion. But I feel very far away from dear friends left behind, and shall often have a heart longing for Illinois and Wisconsin Conferences.

"Brethren pray for us" according to the faith of reason. Be ye well and prosperous evermore! Very cordially yours,

Denver, Col., Dec. 15, 1880. R. L. HERBERT.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

ENGLEWOOD, ILL.—A new Universalist church is going up here. The ministry of Miss Florence Kollock is proving very acceptable to all phases of progressive minds.

CHICAGO.—Central Church recently raised the salary of Prof. Swing from seven to ten thousand dollars, evidence that independency, poetry, culture and a genial, soothing optimism are duly appreciated.

ST. LOUIS.—The "James Smith Academy" for boys, and the "Mary Institute" for girls, are overflowing, as is also the Manual Training School started last year. All these are departments of the Washington University.

BARABOO, WIS.—A Committee of the West Wisconsin Methodist Ministerial Association is considering a camp meeting or Sunday School Association on the banks of Devil's Lake, next summer. This sounds like old-time devotion. It is carrying the war into the enemy's country.

PAY THE DEBT, OR NO MINISTER.—Dr. Rider, the revered pastor of the St. Paul's Universalist Church in this city, told his people with commendable plainness, on the 19th ult., that unless the entire debt of $50,000, now hanging over the church, was cleared by the 1st of January, he would accept the call extended him by Dr. Chapin's society, of New York.

MONROE, WIS.—We spent Sunday, the 19th, with Liberal friends at this point, occupying the pulpit vacated by Bro. Fisher over two years ago. The two hearty audiences filling the house, the Sunday School of about 100 members, and the active preparation for holiday enjoyments, testified to the worth of the work done and the possibilities of work to do.

IMPROVED CITIZENS.—A Society for Political Education has recently been formed, under the management of a committee of twenty-five with five secretaries to represent the different divisions of the country. It has no president, and aims to become national in its character. It will seek to encourage the study of all questions of statesmanship. A course of reading is already arranged for 1881, namely: Nordhoff's "Politics for Young Americans," Prof. Perry's

"Introduction to Political Economy," Johnson's "History of American Politics," and McAdam's "Alphabet in Finance."

ENGLAND.—The Presbyterians are agitated over a proposition to modify the Confession of Faith in order that more young men may join the ministry.

—The British and Foreign Unitarian Association had a jolly time at the Canaan St. Hotel, London, on the return of Mr. and Mrs. Clayden from America. C. H. James, Esq., M. P., presided. Mr. Clayden gave some of his impressions, among which were: 1. The freedom of religion from any State-craft in this country. 2. "The absolute absence of any of those numerous gin palaces which we meet at every corner of every street in London." During the whole of our travels there my wife and I were continually on the look-out for the drinking-shops—[Laughter]—they were not to be found. What few there were had this characteristic, that they had dark doors so that people could see the feet of the persons inside, but not their faces, The reason of this was, that all through the United States it is considered a discreditable thing to be seen in a public drinking shop." 3. A chilling habit in our churches to delegate the singing to an elaborate choir.

NORA, ILL.—Our dear friend and brother, Rev. Mr. Wassall, is much troubled with heresy hunters and heresy trials. First he was dismissed from the Congregational fellowship, and then the society at Nora, which persisted in retaining him as their pastor, was churched for this and, we believe, rebuked; then non-official denunciation fell upon him through the columns of the *Advance*, from which Mr. Wassall's replies are excluded, and he is driven to the more hospitable pages of the theological Go-Easy, the denominational What-is-it—the *Alliance*. His letter is before us. We are persuaded that a noble, manly spirit actuates Mr. Wassall in this long clinging to a fellowship which can only be half hearted on either side. We are also persuaded that such a clinging brings confusion and concern greater than it is worth. The outside is so much more hospitable, cosey and withal, more useful, to our eyes, than these back-seats on the inside, that we regret that others feel called upon to suffer so much for the sake of occupying them. We have no relish for church trials or ecclesiastical politics. Brethren, let *us* read the "Beatitudes," and let the church guardians enjoy the "Woes" to their hearts' content. We like the fifth better than the twenty-third chapter of Matthew.

MICHIGAN.—F. E. Kitterege has been doing missionary work at Manistee. Rev. J. Frank Thompson, who has been preaching at Muskegon for the month of December, is to follow up the work at Manistee for the month of January, with prospects of a permanent congregation. The Unitarian church of Ionia is a new congregation to which Mrs. J. T. Sunderland, of Ann Arbor, preached to on the 19th ult., speaking in the morning on the "Life and Character of Lucretia Mott," and in the evening on the "Fatherhood of God." Mrs. Sunderland is one ordained to the pulpit work by ordinances more sacred than the laying on of human hands.—The movement so auspiciously begun by Rev. Rowland Conner at East Saginaw three months ago has taken upon itself permanent shape. It has organized under the name of the Unitarian church of Saginaw, and funds have been raised for the coming year's work, with fair prospects of a church building. The society is organized "for the advancement of truth, justice and love," and welcomes to its membership "all those who desire to do good in it or get good from it." Our ever vigilant brother the *Free Religious Index*, of Boston, seems to think this a somewhat novel basis for a Unitarian society. But it is the basis upon which most of the younger societies in the West rest. It is, indeed, the working basis of the Western Unitarian Conference,—this society being shaped partly after a model suggested by the secretary of the above conference.

THE UNITY CLUB.

DIRECTORY.

The following is a partial list of the Clubs that have claimed fellowship in this, our larger UNITY CLUB. We desire to make the list as complete as possible, and our readers are requested to send us the necessary information. We hope the several Secretaries will exchange programmes and such other courtesies as may lead to a better acquaintance and possibly, in the future, to some very helpful co-operation and mutual studies.

NAMES.	LOCALITY.	DATE OF ORGANIZATION.	SECRETARY.
The Eclectic Club	Quincy, Ill.	Feb. 1872	——
Mutual Imp. Club	Janesville, Wis	Oct. 1874	Miss R. A. Hatherall.
The Unity Club	Cincinnati, O.	Feb. 1876	Miss Belle Fithian.
The Unity Club	St. Paul, Minn.	Apr. 1877	Miss Emma L. Kelley.
Young People's Club	Ann Arbor, Mich.	Oct. 1878	Miss Amy Orcutt.
Ladies' Liberal Club	Lawrence, Kas.	—— 1878	Mrs. A M. Allen.
The Unity Club	Bloomington, Ill.	Sept. 1880	Miss H. E. Dunn.
The Vesper Club	Chicago, Ill.	Oct. 1880	——
The Unity Club	Westboro, Mass.	Oct. 1880	Miss M. F. Harding.
The Helpful Club	Northfield, Mass.	Oct. 1880	H. C. Parsons.
The Unity Club	DesMoines, Iowa	Nov 1880	Mrs. L. A. Berry.
The Literary Club	Brodhead, Wis.	Oct. 1880	Miss Ada M. Bowen.

THE HELPFUL CLUB, NORTHFIELD, MASS.

This is a parish club, under the leadership of Rev. J. L. Marsh, organized on the model suggested in these columns. All attending pay five cents at the door. The Literary evening devotes twenty minutes to a conversation on current literature, fifteen minutes to a biographical sketch, then the book of the evening. They are at present working on the writings of Dickens. The Social evening has "Our Paper," followed by music, games, etc. They have had lectures from Rev. Geo. Brenner, on "Robert Burns;" Rev. J. B. Green, on "The Crusades," and Rev. Washington Gladden, on "Pure Gold." The Dramatic committee has holiday work.

THE UNITY CLUB, WESTBORO, MASS.

A correspondent writes: "We have tried original articles, poems, readings, etc., but at last meeting we tried the plan suggested in UNITY, of giving out certain topics for members to be prepared to impart information upon. It works well and brings out members that will not undertake anything *original*. One Tuesday evening of each month is given to sociability, with a supper, that brings out a larger number than come to Sunday services. Our membership is confined to young people connected with the Unitarian church, averaging in age from eighteen to thirty-five. Others would gladly join. I am a subscriber to UNITY, and always look to it for information of interest to the club. We are in excellent condition, and nothing else ever had so beneficial an effect on all our church interests. Every church should have an organization of similar character."

THE UNITY CLUB, BLOOMINGTON, ILL.

The order of studies for the ten working evenings of the season is before us, with topics, dates, and workings all assigned. When once such a programme is fairly printed, an immense strain is lifted from off the shoulders of the managers. The course contains studies of the writings of Lowell, Whittier, Holmes, Emerson, the Carey sisters, Hawthorne, and Irving; studies in Social and Natural Sciences, on Kin-

dergardens in Germany, Kindergardens in the United States, Prison Reform, the works of Mary Carpenter, Dr. Howe, and Dorothea Dix, "The Blue Bird as a Citizen," and "Backward through the Ages; a Geological Sketch." The leader writes: "Friends were very skeptical as to the outcome of any such innovation upon their precious time. * * But so far the meetings have been full and successful, and everybody is full of hope for the future of our Unity Club."

E. E. HALE'S READING CLASSES.

The *Independent* for Dec. 16th contains an article on reading classes from Mr. Hale, than whom we know no one more competent to give advice. He says: "In my own experience as a parish minister, I look back on the work which such classes have done with me with more satisfaction than on any other organized effort in which I have shared for the education of the young." We summarize his advice as follows: The class should not be so large as to interfere with free conversation. Thirty probably a maximum. The members should know at the beginning what the work is to be. The leader should give a good deal of time to preparation and be willing to "confess ignorance." He would almost "insist that no one should attend the class who would not promise to attend to the end. Nothing is so ruinous as the presence of the virgins who have no oil in their vessels, and are in the outer darkness before the course is half done. I think it is well to agree in the beginning on a small fee—of a dollar or a half-dollar—which can be expended in books of reference, or supper, or charity, or anything else desirable. The real object of the fee is weeding out unreliable members. Members who will not take notes should be expelled." To make sure he would have a class journal giving a brief summary of each meeting. This journal is to be made up by members selected by accident at the close of each meeting.

CINCINNATI UNITY CLUB.

The annual report of this club for year ending Oct. 7th, 1880, contains constitution, history, officers and reports of the various activities. It has a graduate of Antioch College for a President, and a balance sheet which shows $244.30 left of the $4,827.20 made during the year. Financially this is the mammoth club of our circle.

This club avowedly makes "self-improvement an incidental feature of its activity," seeking public service rather than private edification. It has at present one hundred and thirty-six members and no church conditions of membership. The committee on culture is able to report a most noble work. The fourteen Sunday lectures given by most conspicuous talent, to an audience averaging eleven hundred, left an impression on the city which it is not easy to estimate. A committee on amusement reports such triumphs as the successful rendition of "Pinafore" and the "Doctor of Acantara," at Pike's Opera House, before very profitable audiences, and the performance of a musical burletta, "Cinderella," written for the club by Mrs. Alice Williams Brotherton. The committee on helpfulness report $510.50 given to the Women's Christian Association; $510.50 for the Associated Charities; $100 for the Colored Orphan Asylum; $429.70 to the Unitarian Sunday School and $55.25 to direct charities. Altogether the report reflects great credit upon the club, and contains matter of much interest to club workers, which will well repay the stamp that will secure it either from the secretary of the club (see directory above) or from Rev. C. W. Wendte, whom our readers have already recognized as the power behind the throne in all this activity.

THE ECLECTIC CLUB, QUINCY, ILL.

This is an organization of the Second Congregational (Unitarian) church of Quincy, Ill. It was organized February 14th, 1872, with fifteen members. Since its organization there have been one hundred and fifty-six names signed to the constitution. The average attendance of members at its meetings has been about twenty-five. The vacancies occasioned by removal or by death have been promptly filled, so that the membership has remained complete. Great care is exercised in the election of members. They are taken in slowly so as to enable the club fully to absorb them into its social life, no more than one person being permitted to join during any one calendar month. The club meets fortnightly, generally in the church parlors, though by a vote of the members an invitation to meet at a private residence may be accepted. The programmes for the meetings are varied in order to suit the different tastes of all the members. One evening is devoted to science; another to literature; the third to dramatic entertainment, and the fourth to social enjoyment. On the 14th of each February the club celebrates its anniversary, on which occasion a history of the year just past is read by the club historian. During its existence the club has given about twenty-five public entertainments, all of which have given general satisfaction. From the proceeds of these entertainments the club expenses have been defrayed and about one thousand dollars have been devoted to home charities. Of late years, however, the public entertainments have been dispensed with, and the expenses are met by occasional assessments. The club has always been in a prosperous condition. The past has been interesting and instructive to each member, and the future prospects are good for a long life of active, useful work.

THE STUDY TABLE.

THE HISTORICAL POETRY OF THE ANCIENT HEBREWS. Translated and critically examined by Michael Heilprin. Vol. II. $2.00.

LITERARY NOTES.

A new work by Frances Power Cobbe, on the "Duties of Women," is soon to appear.——Dore is at work on illustrations for Shakespeare soon to be published.——A memorial volume of the life and services of Lucretia Mott, which will contain contributions by Whittier, Dr. Furness, Robert Collyer, Charles G. Ames and others, is soon to be published by the editor of *The Journal*, 144 N. Seventh street, Philadelphia, Price 50 cents; $4.50 per doz.——Gen. Lew Wallace received the impulse to write his last story, "Ben-Hur, a tale of the Christ," from an interview with Robert Ingersoll while riding in a railroad car from Crawfordsville to Indianapolis.——"The Iliad of India," is the title of Edwin Arnold's new poem, soon to appear.——Mr. John Bartlett, the compiler of "Familiar Quotations," is a busy business man, a member of the Little, Brown & Co's. publishing house, Boston. This book has been made over seven times. It is incomparable and indispensable to the literary worker.——The *Christian Register* of December 18, has an interesting account of an interview with Herbert Spencer, by Rev. M. J. Savage, the most enthusiastic interpreter of Mr. Spencer found in the American pulpit.——The *Woman's Journal*, of the same date, issues a supplement containing J. W. Chadwick's sermon on Lucretia Mott and Lydia Maria Child.

THE NEWSPAPER.

The new year brings the perplexing problem as to what newspapers to take. This is a question vitally related to the Study Table and the intellectual life of to-day. It is doubtless true that much of the best thought of the day finds its first expression in the current magazine and newspaper, but it is also true that the immense quantity of this literature which is being thrown upon the market renders it one of the most persistent and subtle foes to real culture. The amateur student of literature is in constant danger of being overlaid and smothered by the newspaper and the magazine, the first cause of whose existence is commercial rather than literary. Everywhere will be found those who have no time to read through a book or to make special study of any subject, who still spend many hours each week in scanning metropolitan dailies and in indulging in the current monthlies. Such reading is always in danger of becoming the most indolent of habits. An "habitual" slave of the daily paper is in a bad way intellectually. In his great desire to keep up with the times, he is in danger of hopelessly falling behind. He is poorly posted who knows more about the latest scandal than he does about the latest story of George Eliot, or the last poems of Longfellow. The young man or woman seeking true culture and real growth will do well to beware of too many newspapers, for they filch time and dissipate mental energy. One good non-partisan weekly, the monthly digest of current events from one of the standard monthlies, the discriminating *resume* of the best new books, such as may be found in "The Literary World," "The Literary News," or "Good Reading," with some plain, wholesome—not *too brilliant*—paper, like the *Youth's Companion*, for the younger side of all the inmates of the home, will do much to keep up the thoughtful life in a home, giving strength instead of the mental debility that often overtakes those who are heroically trying to find time to "look over the papers."

THE REVIEWS.

The November Nineteenth Century:—There is not a dull article in this number. Lord Sherbrooke in "Legislation for Ireland," brings to bear a good deal of hard, common sense upon that knotty problem, and makes the most valuable contribution of the year to the literature of the subject.

—"The Sabbath," by Prof. Tyndall, is characterized by his inimitable style of lucid exposition; by his Catholic spirit, and by his keen insight into the heart of any subject which he attempts to treat. His thought ranges far beyond the topic of the article. His contrast of Peter and Paul is just and forcible; his sketch of early christianity is vivid; his outline of the Sabbath controversy is clear and incisive. What could be finer than this:

"Let us cherish our Sunday as an inheritance derived from the past; but let it be understood that we cherish it because it is in principle, reasonable, and in practice, salutary."

Again:

"The seed of the spirit is cast in vain amid stones and thorns. * * * Drunkenness ruins the substratum of resolution. The physics of the drunkard's brain are incompatible with moral strength. Here your first care ought to be to cleanse and improve the organ. Break the sot's associations; change his environment; alter his nutrition; displace his base imaginations by thoughts drawn from the purer sources which we seek to render accessible to him."

Clergymen often reply to the scientists' criticism, by saying that religion is not his sphere, but Prof. Tyndall is evidently at home in religion, history, and phenomena.

—Frederic Harrison has a second article on "Creeds," this one devoted to the "Human Synthesis." It is a remarkably earnest, almost impassioned, and thoughtful plea for a religious principle that will *unify* life. He urges that we emphasize the religious significance of knowledge. His definition of religion is suggestive. Many will find his reference to the Evolutionists partial, if not somewhat unfair. The sentences that sparkle are many.

"A logical Materialism gives us law without God, as theology had given us God without law." "Act under the influence of affection, and think in order to act."

How tender is this:

"Religion stands to-day like a pathetic Gothic ruin, soothing and touching the finer natures amongst us still, but quite outside of and apart from the busy life of man."

—Mr. Grant writes strongly against "Competitive Examinations," and Mr. Mallock expounds the "Philosophy of Conservatism."

The November Blackwood's:—It contains a poem by Mr. Story, fourteen pages long, entitled, "A Jewish Rabbi in Rome." It purports to be a letter written in the fifteenth century by a Jew in Rome, to a friend, in which he gives his estimate of Jesus:—

"Lofty of thought, a pure idealist;"

describes his own religious condition:—

"I am a seeker:—though my faith is firm
I will not tie my mind in knots of creeds."
"The truth is vast,
And never was there creed embraced it all;"

pictures the condition of Rome:—

"Justice, with sad face
Weeping, hath fled and Mercy's voice is dumb;"

outlines the contrast between what the church teaches and what Jesus taught:—

"Doctrine and life to him were one. To these
Doctrine from life is utterly divorced;"

and also wonders that they who worship Jesus as God, whose teaching was, "Love your enemies," should keep his own people—the Jews—in this condition:

"A halter on our necks, as we were dogs—
Insulted, hooted, jeered at by the mob."

The November Contemporary:—The Duke of Argyle continues his articles on "The Unity of Nature." In the present number he argues in a very labored and diffuse manner, that instinct is *not* "organized experience," accumulated by inheritance. He says: "To account for instinct by experience is nothing but an Irish bull." His point is to prove that mind is imparted to man—is not a junction of nerve tissue—because instinct is so imparted to the animal. But a set purpose "to dispel the sickly dreams of the Agnostic" is hardly a scientific attitude of study.

—There are three papers on the great Irish land question, none of which is marked by anything like statesmanlike insight, while that by Alfred Wallace is as visionary as it is radical. The real issue belongs more to the race than to the division of the land, bad as that is.

—"The Future of the Canadian Dominion," by Mr. Wm. Clarke, is, strange to say, an English plea for annexation to the Union. We find these significant sentences:

"England is yet a great and rich country, with vast power and force; but America has the promise of the future." "A league of English-speaking people is one of the grand possibilities yet folded in the future. Of that league the United States must hold the hegemony by virtue of power and greatness."

—"An American Statesman" writes of "Party Polities in the United States." His assertion of the absence of political issues shows that he is not a politician. He might have said

that there can be no vital political issues, healthy political action, or true political education, until the civil service is reformed. His criticisms upon our newspapers are severe, and unquestionably well deserved.

—"Old and New Japan" deals with a subject interesting to Americans. The arrangement of the article is bad. There are facts enough, but no clear groupings. The progress of the last ten years makes a marvelous record. Railroads, telegraphs, lighthouses, postage, health boards,—what a revolution in ten years. But there has been greatest progress in education. To-day 40 per cent of her school population receive instruction, and there are one-third as many girls as boys at school. Here is an interesting question: What will be the religion of Japan at the end of a century? J. H. C.

HEILPRIN'S POETRY OF THE HEBREWS.

Mr. Heilprin's first volume (noticed in UNITY of Sept. 1, 1879,) gave us the Bible songs and song-fragments about the Patriarchs, Moses, Joshua, the Judges, Saul and David. Continuing the series,—which is arranged by the chronology of subject, not of authorship,—his second volume begins with the two Psalms (lxxxix, and cxxxii.) referring still to David. David, above all others, is the hero of Scripture *poetry*, while Scripture *history* frankly tells his stains as well as glories. Solomon, on the other hand, is a great national hero of the history, while neither Psalmist nor Prophet spares him a single word,—him, the builder of the idol-shrines! The so-called "Song of Solomon," a "charming pastoral drama," probably dates later than 300 B. C.

After the two Psalms come the fragments of an older "Micah" of King Ahab's time (about 900 B. C., 1 Kings xxii.), imbedded, our critic suggests, in the Micah of the Bible-book (725 B. C.); somewhat as the Bible "Isaiah" is generally recognized now as compact of two "Isaiahs," and our "Zechariah" of no less than three of that name with a gap of two centuries between the first and last.

Next is given the elegy on Moab's fate, contained in Isaiah xv.-xvii.,—its whole character antique, and, for the Old Testament, unique; but it is confessedly a mere "may-have-been" that connects it, as Heilprin does, with the conquest of the country by Jehoshaphat (about 900 B. C.) and the inscription on the "Moabite Stone."

The rest of this volume deals with Amos and Hosea, the earliest(?) prophets whose names are attached to Bible-books, —the two whose warnings lashed the Northern Israel during the beginning and middle of that eighth century B. C., whose end saw the kingdom the prey of the Assyrians. Amos, the humble shepherd from the borders of the wilderness, comes forth as the champion of the poor, denouncing in Jehovah's name the oppressions and profligate luxuries of Israel's nobles. Hosea's theme is her idolatries, the desertion of Jehovah by the woman-nation whom the God had loved and rescued. Amos knows that *some* chastiser must arise to tame the oppressors because Jehovah is terrible in righteousness; Hosea, a little later in the century, plainly descries the messenger of God's wrath, the fierce Assyrian, approaching. Amos' words ring like a trumpet blast: Hosea's words are tenderer, more idyllic in their hot but sad reproach. In Mr. Heilprin's version the story of the beloved but adulterous wife (Hosea i.-ii.) becomes the poem of grief and passion that it really is. For the common reader, indeed, our author's chief service lies in his new translations of the Scripture-poems, and the terse, light-throwing notes beneath their text. Our so-called "chapters" become more, not less, dramatic in becoming more intelligible. The time is near when even churchly men will smile at the solemn centuries in which earnest readers paced so diligently the rugged mistranslations of our modern versions,—those made in the first generations after the Bible became a book of the people,—as the veritable Holy Ground of Revelation. Will "Palestine Explorations" disenchant the ground of sanctity? Both yes and no.

One of the helpfully disenchanting sections of this book (pp. 104–112) is that in which the popular ideal of the Prophet as pictured in the Bible-histories is contrasted with the actual Prophet self-pictured in his own writings: the ideal Elisha, *e.g.*, startling the eye with his miracles of rescue and of vengeance, with the actual Amos or Hosea startling the conscience with words uttered as from "the God whose attributes are omnipotence and holiness—Jehovah is his name." In regard to the Hebrew Prophets as *fore-tellers*, the following passage indicates Mr. Heilprin's place among the Bible critics of the thoroughly rationalistic school: "The details of prophecy were not meant to be understood in their literal sense; only a general idea was inculcated, and a vague vista exhibited, in holy earnest. The 'Word of God,' as we find it in the prophetic canon, was an announcement inspired by the prophet's conceptions of God and the divine fitness of things; but only what was *general* in it was uttered as irresistibly true: the *particulars* were consequences, drawn from fundamental tenets and from special circumstances, but drawn with the license of an orator or a poet. To err in particulars was neither to be deceived nor to deceive; it shook neither the prophet's convictions nor the people's confidence in his mission. Allegorical images and poetical diction well suited such unveilings of the future."

Our inference, from certain personal references gleaming pleasantly through the chinks of the notes, that Mr. Heilprin is of Hebrew birth and training and friendships, lends us the more confidence in his guidance; and the trust is strengthened by the absence of that critic's-sureness which betrays the prentice-hand.

One word of wonder: our author mingles the good and the bad manners of literature by indulging us with sumptuous paper and print, and by withholding from us all index, table of contents, even chapter-headings. He barely numbers his sections and marches them out, a nameless troop, like prisoners in a jail-yard taking exercise. By both signs he probably indicates his sense that he is not writing for us common people. A third sign,—the abundant detail of German and Hebrew learning,—more worthily and necessarily keeps his audience small. There is a bit of pathos in books like these appearing among us: here stands a scholar offering a very little basket of choice garden-fruit in our bustling markets, where the crowds press to buy their coarser apples by the barrel, while the book-noticers come up and finger the dainty product with ignorant patronage,—as now! When his work is finished, we trust Mr. Heilprin will compress the substance of the volumes into one, offer it in cheaper form, combine certain parts of the chapters in the form of a general Introduction, provide it with those indices, etc., which most of us are grateful for, and thus make the fruits of his industry and his fairness of mind go round a larger circle.

W. C. G.

I know of no position in the world which I would purchase or accept with surrender of one iota of my convictions or of my character.—*Karl Heinzen.*

The Sunday School.

SOME THOUGHTS UPON SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

MRS. ELIZA R. SUNDERLAND.

(*Concluded.*)

What, then, shall we teach? I would answer, first, negatively: We should *not* teach *science as such*, and we should *not teach literature as such.* Why? Because, though both science and literature form a part of God's great plan in the on-going of the world, and are therefore eminently worthy of study, abundant provision has already been made for teaching these in our public schools and colleges. Indeed, so large a place has science assumed in the estimation of the present generation, that the tendency is strong toward the belief that therein is to be found all the truth worthy man's consideration, if not all possible to humanity. But surely every thoughtful Sunday School worker believes that there are regions of truth lying outside the domain of physical science and general literature, whose depths the plummet of physical science cannot by any possibility sound,—and truth, moreover, which has formed, and will continue to form, a much more important factor in moulding human character and shaping human destiny than the truths of physical science or of general literature can ever do. I mean, of course, the regions of sentiment and duty, the truths pertaining to man's relations to his fellow men and to God; in other words, the truths of morality and religion. To those of us who thus believe in the existence and importance of this domain of truth, the reason is obvious. Why?

Because (1), we believe that, great as are the advantages of a knowledge of science and literature, and much as these contribute to all true salvation of men, there is no *highest* and *truest* salvation; no highest and truest *civilization* even, without a foundation laid in morals and religion.

Because (2), the only recognized *organized agency* for teaching morals and religion *to our children* is the Sunday School. It becomes thus imperative that we make the very most of the one paltry hour per week devoted to these highest interests to making as deep and lasting impressions as possible for morals and religion. We should sacredly guard the single hour of Sunday School instruction against the encroachments of physical science and general literature. And this leads directly to the positive answer to the question: "What shall we teach in our Sunday Schools?" To this question I answer, we should teach,—

I. Morals.

II. Religion.

III. Unitarian Religion.

Because (3), as Liberals in religion we cannot, if we are true to our trust, neglect to teach our liberal, or, if you please, our Unitarian faith to our children. If we as a denomination have any reason for a separate existence; if we have, or think we have, any truth that the rest of the world has not and needs, then woe to us if we fail to proclaim this truth; but especially woe to us if we leave our own children, whom we love and for whom we are responsible, ignorant of this light of truth, and send them out into the world to fall a prey to the superstition all around them because of this ignorance.

Orthodox influences are the prevailing influences in all our communities to-day, and will be for many days to come. Our children will be instructed in orthodox theology, whether we will or not. My experience is doubtless the experience of other mothers. My home, two years ago, was near several Catholic families, and my little four and six-year-old children came in, day after day, during Lent, with most startling questions; such as, "Mamma, is it true that all of God can get into the Catholic church? Johnny says when the priest says mass, God comes right down into their church. Does he?" Or, "Mamma, is it true that there is a hell full of red-hot coals and big snakes, where everybody will go who is not good? and the fire will burn them and the snakes bite them? Mary says so." During the past summer, I spent several weeks with some good orthodox friends, and my little children, among other pleasures, greatly enjoyed swinging with their little cousins in the hammocks, and keeping time to the motion of the swing by singing. The hymns usually chosen were those of Moody and Sankey. So that hour after hour I could hear the dear little childish voices singing such words as, "I'm so glad that Jesus loves me; Jesus loves even me;" "Almost persuaded Christ to receive," ending with the wail, "Too late!" or "Jesus died and paid it all," etc., etc. I cannot afford,—no mother who believes in a rational religion for herself and her children can afford,—not to provide an antidote for such errors and superstitions by laying deep foundations in what we believe to be truth.

"But," answers an objector—I meet such not infrequently—"this kind of teaching is sectarian and would be prejudicing the mind of my child before he is old enough to decide these questions for himself, and I wish and intend to leave him perfectly free from all theological bias until he is old enough to make his own choice." The answer to such an objection is obvious. First, in laying down, as one of the fundamental tenets of our faith, the principle of free inquiry as the right and the duty of every person of mature years, we provide beforehand for the removal of any shackles which may be imposed by education. And even if this were not so, I recognize my duty to decide with reference to everything else in my child's education without any question of bias. I decide, for instance, upon the method of instruction, and the teacher to be employed in his musical education. I may decide very unwisely, and thus impose upon him a method other than the best, which will cripple his progress and limit his attainments. But suppose I had made no decision in order to leave him free to decide for himself upon method and teacher? Does any one think it would have been better for his musical education? When would he have reached the point where he would be capable of thus judging and deciding for himself? Ability to judge and decide upon any subject is the result not of years but of knowledge and thought upon the subject, and the beginnings of knowledge upon every subject must necessarily be made under the guidance of those wiser in that direction than we. Only when we have learned what others have thought upon a given subject are we prepared to make a comparison or a choice between rival claims to the truth. And this is as true in matters of religious faith as elsewhere. So that if I cannot shirk the responsibility of deciding that my child shall be taught, and what and how he shall be taught, in matters of secular education, much less am I excusable if I let him drift without definite instruction in matters spiritual. With a great price obtained I the freedom and joy of a liberal, rational faith; alas for me and for them, if I should fail to transmit the boon to my children. Alas for all our children,

if parents and Sunday School children fail here. "For this cause came I into the world," said the Master, "that I might bear witness to the truth," and if we would be true disciples of the Master this must be our controlling thought in deciding upon the instruction we will give our children in our Sunday Schools.

Granted, that the subjects to be taught in our schools shall be morals, religion and the grounds and principles of our Unitarian faith,—what shall be our text-books and tools? First in importance and time, I would name the Bible. This has been the recognized text-book of morals and religion through all the Christian centuries, and it contains moral precept and religious inspiration sufficient, independent of any sacredness with which time has invested it, to make it our leading guide-book of morals and religion for a long time to come. We cannot afford, therefore, not to avail ourselves of this help in teaching our children. But, secondly, we live in the midst of people who make the Bible a kind of fetish through the dogmas of infallible inspiration and supernatural revelation, I doubt whether any influence at work to-day is so potent in holding the shackles of old superstitions upon men's minds and consciences as this one of belief in the infallible inspiration of the Bible. It is the work of Liberals to root out and destroy this belief by showing the Bible to be both natural and fallible; and this can only be done when we can speak authoritatively from an exhaustive study both of the contents and history of the book. But more than this, we shall only be able to save the good that is in the Bible to ourselves and our children through a careful and appreciative study of its pages, and a conscientious sifting of the good from the bad. This is a large work and one which our Sunday Schools cannot afford to ignore.

Of other books than the Bible, and especially of books treating of the Bible, there is no lack in our liberal literature, any one of which would furnish a most valuable study for special classes. Among these James Freeman Clarke's "Orthodoxy: its Truths and Errors;" Clodd's "Childhood of Religion" and "Childhood of the World," Clarke's "Ten Great Religions," Gannett's "A Chosen Nation," Knappert's "The Religion of Israel," Chas. Brigham's "Principles and Doctrines of Unitarianism," and Herford's "Story of Religion in England," come readily to mind, and the list could be indefinitely extended. I doubt whether any better three or six months' work could be done in any of our Unitarian Sunday Schools than to take up, clause by clause, some brief statement of our faith and explain and illustrate it, giving our reasons for accepting it as truth.

Time was, and not long ago, when our liberal Sunday School work was in many places necessarily poor for lack of any helps, such as orthodox Sunday Schools had in such abundance. But the past two or three years have wrought a great change in this particular. An entire century of Sunday School work has failed, as it seems to me, to produce anything finer, anything more conscious in preparation, or more vital in results, than the work offered to liberal Sunday Schools in the Unity Lessons of Gannett & Jones on the Bible, and of Mrs. Ames, Mrs. Head and Mrs. Wells on Practical Morality, and of Gannett, this year, on Channing and Unitarianism.

To sum up, then, there is no more important work to be done in the world than that of training our children and youth in morals and religion. For the doing of this work, we have only one organized agency, namely, the Sunday School, which as ordinarily conducted is, as I have urged, utterly inadequate to accomplish the results desired. The question presses itself upon us, therefore, Shall we quietly fold our hands and contentedly leave it to its inefficiency, thereby fostering in the minds of our children a want of moral earnestness and a spirit of indifference to religious thought and religious observances, which will go with them through life, to mar and hinder their perfect development? This, surely, we cannot consent to do. But to make the Sunday School in any sense a place deserving the name it bears of *a school*, serious, systematic, educatory work must be done in it, such as few modern Sunday Schools have ever dreamed of, much less had realized. To accomplish this will require workers. The best brain and heart, the finest business tact and teaching ability in our communion are needed. Can we command them? If not, of little avail will be the wisest decisions as to what we shall teach, or the most perfect tool-chest to assist in the work.

With enough of earnestness and faith in our principles, and enough of consecration to what we believe to be truth to furnish this needed teaching ability, and with the high standard of attainment before us, for the teacher and scholar, which the State demands of the teachers and scholars in *its* schools, a grand future is before us worthy the grand free faith for which we work. But if our churches have not the earnestness and devotion necessary to make the Sunday School a real *school* of *religion* and *morality*, then, rather than degrade these high themes by leaving them to be taught to our children by a class of teachers whose only recommendation is their willingness to teach and their ignorance of their unfitness for the work, let us give up the Sunday School entirely, cease the pretense of giving religious and moral instruction through this agency, and thus throw the responsibility of such instruction directly and wholly upon parents and pastors.

The Exchange Table.

The Star and Covenant—A Reform.—"The Pennsylvania and New York Central Railway have interdicted the sale of yellow-colored literature on the railroads. May that wise regulation extend to the West, and everywhere prevail. We have long wondered why that intolerable nuisance, as he too often is, who shoves all sorts of literary trash into the faces of travelers, is tolerated by any railroad."

Good Literature, quoting *Harper's Easy Chair*, says: "Mr. Anthony Trollope says that anybody can set up the business or profession of literature who can command a room, a table, and pen, ink and paper. Would he also say that any man may set up the trade of an artist who can buy an easel, a palette, a few brushes and some colors? It can be done, indeed, but only as a man who can hire a boat may set up for an East India merchant."

The Sunday School Times says: "Bible revision is popular nowadays. There are fresh hands at it on every side. A recent attempt in this line is shown in the following rendering of a familiar text, as given on a Sunday School programme which comes to us from the West: 'Train up a child in the way he or she should go, and when he or she is old, he or she will not depart from it.' If he or she who made that

change in the text thinks that he or she has thereby given to those words an added force to his or her scholars, or to the parents of his or her scholars, or to any one who knows of his or her work, he or she will find that he or she has been very much mistaken."

ATLANTIC MONTHLY.—A writer in the January number of this magazine, in "Some Reminiscences of Thackeray," hits the slow recognition of English authors in France: "When I saw Mr. Thackeray pass our carriage door I knew him, and therefore captured him. Desirous of making way for him, I remarked to my fellow-travelers, a Frenchman and his wife, 'I would like to make a place for Mr. Thackeray.' The fact that I named Mr. Thackeray made no impression, apparently, upon my French friends. I annotated my remark by saying, 'Mr. Thackeray, the celebrated English author.' Same indifference. Having hailed Mr. Thackeray and got him installed, as a preliminary remark I referred to my effort to explain his status to my neighbors, and to the impression I had made. He laughed, and said, 'Oh, it takes fifty years for an English reputation to travel to France.' Indeed, something strongly confirming that view happened only *last year*. To a congress of literary men called to meet in Paris, invitations were sent out to foreign authors of distinction to be present, and among them to Thackeray and Dickens!"

BOSTON COMMONWEALTH.—A correspondent of this paper writing from New York, says: "Last Saturday afternoon Mr. E. C. Stedman, the banker-poet and his wife gave a very brilliant kettledrum in honor of Mr. Moncure D. Conway, of London. Among those present were the venerable Oliver Johnson and his wife; Rev. Robert Collyer, John Chadwick, Hjalmar Hjorth Boyesen, who wittily described how he lived out of the gay world, preferring 'to be comfortably unfashionable rather than uncomfortably fashionable,' Junius Henri Browne, Lawrence Hutton, Prof. Youmans, Mrs. Mary Mapes Dodge, Miss May L. Booth, 'Jennie June,' and a host of other pleasant people, were also there. It was an assembly of noticeably fine faces. The following Sunday Mr. Conway preached to large congregations in Chickering Hall and in the Church of the Messiah. For Mr. Collyer he preached the same discourse which he gave in the Parker-Memorial in Boston. Mr. Collyer offered the benediction, as usual, 'and in the name of thy Son Jesus Christ.' Then, as by an afterthought, and in graceful compliment to the compiler of a pantheistic ritual, he suddenly added: "and of all thy other sons.'"

THE INDEX quotes from and makes the following comments upon a sermon to women, by an ultra High Church English clergyman, published in the *Philadelphia Times*, and delivered in St. Clement's Church, Philadelphia: "His views of woman and of the marriage relation are, certainly, quite in keeping with the mediæval character of the High Church theology. Indeed, they go quite back to the 'primitive simplicity' of barbarism, when woman was held as a slave, or we might even say to the pre-adamite era of brutalism. Hear him: 'To her husband, the wife owes the duty of unqualified obedience. There is no crime that a man can commit which justifies his wife in leaving him or applying for that monstrous thing, divorce. It is her duty to submit herself to him always, and no crime that he can commit justifies her lack of obedience. If he is a bad or wicked man, she may gently remonstrate with him, but refuse him never.' And again: 'Widows and maiden ladies are designed by Providence for the purpose of giving a tone to society. They should all be religious women. An irreligious woman is a bad man spoiled. For the disgusting product of modern times, a woman who does her own atheistical thinking, I have nothing but contempt.' * * * * * If this English missionary has nothing better to teach American women than he offers in this sermon, he had better betake himself at once across the Atlantic. America has just lost a woman—Lucretia Mott—who was accustomed to do her own thinking and acting, and one remembered word of whom will do more for American women than all the sermons this preacher of the primitive gospel of the woods can have ever uttered. She at once meets his barbarianism and the modern reactionary license from it by that favorite sentence of hers, 'In the true marriage relation, the independence of the husband and wife is equal, their dependence mutual, and their obligations reciprocal.'"

THE STAR AND COVENANT has been asked by a subscriber to define the differences and the positions of Mr. Swing and Mr. Thomas. It says: "Professor Swing is a poet, an essayist, an elegant writer, most at home in treating themes that require the taste of the literary connoisseur, the critical faculty, humor, ability to analyze human motives, and present common themes in a way to please the average hearer. As a religious reformer he is essentially a sceptic. He denies, he rejects, but rarely affirms. He discards the old, but one is uncertain what he substitutes for the rejected error. His treatment of the greatest of themes impresses his hearers and readers that it is a matter of indifference what view is taken. If the terms are not paradoxical he might be called a Christian agnostic. The modern word is "uncertainarian." (The *Alliance* softens it into unsectarian.) * * * *

Dr. Thomas is a philosopher, a theologian, emphatically a thinker. His intellectual motions are so slow that many suppose him timid. On the contrary, he is the bravest among the brave. He is cautious, never affirming until he is certain, but never satisfied with negations, and never pausing in an investigation until he reaches an affirmation, without which he seems to think negations valueless. He is a leader of the people, on whose thinking many are depending for stimulus and help, and one who will go forward conscientiously every inch that conscience and judgment dictate. He, too, is a modern controversialist. With no relish for a fight; when the melee is precipitated, his manner of giving and taking blows lends a new charm to controversy. If less a scholar than Swing, he is a far deeper thinker, and not so much a poet, he is far more a philosopher, and dealing less in negations he is much more qualified to lead. In fact he is one of the few leading thinkers in the American pulpit.

It may interest readers at a distance, who have not heard these distinguished gentlemen, to know that Professor Swing is a man of medium size, plain of feature, with poor voice and enunciation, who reads his sermons with no attempt at oratory, but holds his hearers—an immense congregation, invariably—by the simple beauty of his style, and the intrinsic force of his thought; while Dr. Thomas is six feet in height, weighing but about a hundred pounds, a mere shadow, physically, with attractive head and eyes, who, without a line of notes, seems to think out his sermons as though he were holding personal converse with each hearer, almost without gesture or rise or fall of voice, but with a charm of thought that never fails to fascinate his audience—always a crowd—from first word to last.